

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 19, 1999 LB 637

of our problems with another computer program. We're going to replace a hundred years of experience in our district courts with the clerks of our court; we're going to deprive our judges of the information that comes to them through conversations with parties to divorce cases, and we're going to replace all of this with a wonderful, perfect computer system. I simply don't believe it. That's the reason I rise in support of Senator Chambers' motion to bracket. Part of my concern is that last year the Health and Human Services System spent \$100,000 of our money to have a study made of this issue and what did they do? They never even talked to clerks of the district court or to county attorneys who are on the front line. The study, Senator Baker said, is flawed and that's probably an understatement. It was supposed to be a study that dealt with the cost benefits of this program and how can you do that if you don't even talk to the people that are presently running it? And I'll tell you this from personal experience. The matter of child support is a very complex, difficult process overlaid with great emotion resulting from divorce cases. It imposes on our judiciary very difficult questions that they have to resolve. You have normally a wife with children. You have a support problem. You have a husband who...a divorced husband, a noncustodial parent, who may be trying to support two families. The financial decisions that the court must make are very difficult to make and, for the court to do that fairly, the court has to have the proper information. And, again, what Senator Chambers said is right. If you want to talk to somebody, under our present system you can go to the courthouse and you can talk to the clerk or somebody in the clerk's office and, normally, when that case actually goes to court the judge will have received all of that information from the clerk.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR MATZKE: I've been in a courtroom many times where I have seen the district judge turn to the clerk of the district judge and say, do you have any information on this. The judge is faced with a problem. If child support isn't being paid, the ultimate, the ultimate tool that can be used to collect that money is a contempt citation and you can send the nonpaying, usually the husband, to jail. That's what the court has to decide and the court has to have factual information. Now, has